

The Compatibility of the Palestinian Vocational Secondary Education with the Labour Market

مدى انسجام التعليم المهني الثانوي الفلسطيني مع سوق العمل

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ملخص

تهدف هذه الورقة إلى استكشاف آفاق التفاعل بين التعليم الثانوي المهني (جانب العرض) وسوق العمل (جانب الطلب) وفقاً لوجهات نظر الطلبة الخريجين، ومقدمي التدريب، وأصحاب العمل. وقد تم مناقشة مدى ارتباط وفاعلية واستجابة التعليم الثانوي المهني الحكومي في فلسطين لاحتياجات سوق العمل. وقد استعرضت الورقة واقع التعليم الثانوي المهني في فلسطين، وتناولت قضايا ذات علاقة بالنوع الاجتماعي (الجنس)، واتجاهات الخريجين، والتدريب والقابلية للتشغيل والعمل، والاتصال والتعاون. خلصت الدراسة إلى أن التعليم الثانوي المهني في فلسطين لا يستجيب لاحتياجات سوق العمل، وبالتالي لا يحقق الأهداف التي وجد من أجلها بصورة فاعلة. وأن العلاقة القائمة ما بين التعليم الثانوي المهني وسوق العمل هي علاقة ضعيفة، وشكلية، وغير منتظمة أو منهجية، وقد اقترحت الورقة مجموعة من التوصيات لجسر الفجوة ما بين مخرجات نظام التعليم المهني الثانوي، واحتياجات سوق العمل.

Abstract

This reported study explores the interaction between the outcomes of the Palestinian governmental secondary vocational education (the supply side) and the labour market (the demand side) from the perspective of graduates, training providers and employers. Issues related to the current status of secondary vocational education, gender, training and employability, communication and cooperation between the supply side and the demand side are discussed. The study has concluded that the

Palestinian VSE is ineffective, unresponsive and irrelevant to the LM's needs and inputs. The linkage between secondary vocational education and the labour market is weak, superficial and not systematic. Recommendations were made by training providers and employers to bridge the gap between SVE and the labour market.

Keywords: Palestine; Technical and Vocational Education and Training; Secondary Vocational Education; Training; Employment; Labour Market.

Introduction

The Palestinian world of work has changed dramatically in the last decade owing to the effects of the conflict with Israel, the growing process of economic globalization, and the rapid development information and communications technology. These changes are impacting on the Palestinian labour market (LM). As a result, knowledge, skills and competences have turned to be crucial factors for personal growth, employability, and the economic and social sustainability of Palestinian society.

Within this context, the capacity to generate new knowledge and skills relies on, among other things, general education, vocational and technical education, and lifelong learning. Strengthening the relationship and interaction between the outcomes of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training System (TVET) and the LM's needs is the main strategy to strengthen the focus on both the LM and technological progress.

Many questions have been raised in the last years about the relevance and effectiveness of Palestinian TVET and its compatibility with the real requirements of the LM (Al- Jafari & Lafi, 2006). Observers have pointed out the high graduate unemployment rate and the need for better understanding of the school -to- work transition (Bennell & Uwaidat, 2006). The Palestinian TVET system has been under pressure to develop knowledge and skills that can help the workforce become more flexible

and responsive to the needs of the local LM, while competing in the global economy.

This reported study explored the interaction between vocational secondary education (VSE) and the LM from the perspective of graduates, training providers and employers. Issues of the effectiveness, responsiveness and relevance of VSE to the LM will be discussed. Effectiveness can be demonstrated by the graduate employment rates and the revenue from training. Responsiveness of the system is how quickly the VSE responds to the input of the LM. Relevance means the degree to which the training processes and outcomes respond to the needs of the LM (Alzaroo, 2007, p.9 &69).

The study only focused on the domestic LM in West Bank (WB) and Gaza Strip (GS). The effect of the Israeli market and other surrounding markets was excluded in the study although some of the graduates who found work were working in Israel and abroad.

The study only focuses on governmental vocational industrial and agricultural schools and private sector institutions were excluded. Commercial schools were excluded because these schools have no independent premises and they overlapped with the academic schools. This kind of education is closer to academic education rather than vocational education and the results could have been misleading.

Previous Studies

Although the data about Palestinian vocational education is available, research on the school- to -work transition in Palestine is somewhat scarce, sporadic, limited in scope, and inconsistent in methodology and taxonomy of occupation. The literature about Palestinian education contains few studies about the interaction between the education system and the LM. On the other hand, VSEs do not undertake regular tracer studies and therefore statistically reliable data are not available.

One of the early attempts to explore the relation between outcomes of the education system and LM was made by Abu Hillal (Abu Hillal, 1997) who argued for the necessity of strengthening the relationship

between higher education and LM in order to promote development. Awartani and his colleagues (Awartani, et al., 1998) tried to explore the compatibility of the higher education system with the domestic LM. However, the study was limited to the West Bank.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, (PCBS, 2006) has conducted a survey about the state of graduate higher education and vocational training in the Palestinian territory during the period from 14/12/2005 to 19/1/2006. This is the only national survey and is directly pertinent to this study.

The most recent study was by Al-Jafari and Lafi (Al-Jafari & Lafi, 2006) discussed the issue of matching higher education graduates with market needs in Palestine taking into consideration views of both graduates and employers. However, the study investigated the situation of higher education graduates in general, and no particular attention was given to TVET sector or graduates of VSE in particular.

The research of Bennell and Uwaidat (Bennell & Uwaidat, 2006) has been the sole attempt to investigate the interaction between graduates from community colleges and industrial schools on the one hand, and the LM on the other hand. By using a sample of 600 graduates (300 from schools and 300 from technical colleges), they tried to assess the extent to which graduates of technical colleges and industrial schools have succeeded in finding training and /or employment. However, the study focused on graduates of the year 2001 only and targeted graduates of five areas of specialisation from 4 industrial secondary schools only. In addition, views of employers and employers' representatives were not dealt with.

In general, tracer studies which provide important LM information are not undertaken with sufficient frequency or scope owing to lack of resources in VSS.

Methodology

This study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods and data, including both primary and secondary sources. The

secondary sources are based on a critical analysis of surviving documents of Palestinian TVET, and national statistics which were provided by the Ministry of Education and Higher education (MOEHE) and Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).

The primary sources consist of field work and a tracer study. The field work was based on a questionnaire (see appendix 1) and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was designed to address VS graduates, whereas the semi-structured interviews were used to capture the views of different stakeholders within vocational training and the LM. A purposive sample has drawn to implement the questionnaire with the following criteria for inclusion:

- The sample covered four main areas, the South of WB (Hebron), the middle of WB (Ramallah), the North of WB (Nablus) and the Gaza Strip
- The gender issue was taken into consideration where possible.
- The sample covered graduates from both urban and rural areas and refugee camps who had graduated between 2004-06.
- The sample covered most of the specializations in industrial and agricultural governmental schools.
- The focus was both on graduates who were currently employed and unemployed, searching for work.

The graduates who were continuing their tertiary education or jobless but had no intention to work were excluded.

The sample covered 20 specializations from 9 VSs (7 industrial and 2 agricultural) and 135 questionnaires were distributed, filled and collected from graduates of these schools in the targeted four main areas. 16% of the respondents were females. 61% of the respondents were employed whereas the rest were unemployed. The sample represented those graduates whom the field researchers were able to identify in line with the sample criteria, and who were available for interviews or agreed to

fill the questionnaires. Findings should therefore be regarded as indicative only.

The semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were used to collect qualitative data from the supply side (MOEHE policy makers, VSs principals, trainers and teachers) and from the demand side (employers, employers’ representatives, chambers of commerce and worker’s representatives and 125 semi- structured interviews were conducted between December 2006 and January 2007. On the supply side, the interviews were conducted with 26 VSs trainers, 31 VSs teachers and 9 VSs principals, and with 7 key informants from the central administration at the MOEHE and the Ministry of Labour (MOL) whereas on the demand side, the interviews were conducted with 30 employers, 16 employers’ representatives and 6 workers’ representatives.

In sum, views of 260 people on both the demand and the supply sides were captured on the course of this study.

The tracer study was conducted by the researcher in 2007 upon the request of the UNESCO to follow – up graduates of VSs during the period 2004-2006, to find out their current whereabouts and employment status. Data on approximately 1701 graduates who graduated during the period (2004-2006) in the four main areas of the study were collected and analysed. The graduates were traced from school records, key informants (teachers, trainers, friends, etc.) and telephone contacts. About 94% of the traced graduates were located and contacted.

Main findings of the study:

1. VSE composes a small position in the education system

VSE in Palestine is composed of three streams: commercial, agriculture and industrial. The general policy objective for VSE is to prepare a qualified and trained labour force for basic occupational employment and to prepare students who have appropriate interests and abilities to pursue higher education (interview with the Director General of Technical Education at MOEHE). Students of VSE comprised 5 % of the total secondary students in the school year of 2005/2006. If the

students of the commercial stream are excluded, vocational students (industrial and agricultural students) formed less than 2.3% of the total secondary students (MoEHE, 2006). 91 VSs exist in Palestine (95% of them in the West Bank) of which 66 are commercial and 15 are industrial. 85 (94%) of the VSs are governmental. (MoEHE, 2006).

5918 students were studying in VSE (97% of them in the governmental sector) in 2005/2006. 55.5% were in commercial stream, 5.5% were in the agricultural stream and the rest (39%) in the industrial stream. The agricultural stream consists of two programmes: Animal Production and Plant Production, whereas the industrial stream consists of 17 programmes of which only 7 exist in Gaza Strip. These are Sheet Metal Work and Welding, Air Conditioning and Refrigerator, Upholstery, Construction and Land Survey, Plumbing and Central Heating, Lathing and Machining and Communication technology.

The percentage of graduates according to their specializations varies. Among the industrial and the agricultural specializations, the percentage of computer maintenance graduates was the highest (12.6%), followed by electrical utilization (10.9%) and animal production (10.2%), while the lowest graduates' percentage was in the field of clothes manufacturing (0.6%) (MoEHE, 2007). Training programmes currently in use are mostly supply driven and not designed around industry-defined performance objectives and expectations (Interview with the Director General of Technical and Vocational Education at MOEHE, 2007).

2. Females are under- represented

Although girls are quantitatively well-represented in general school education, they are under-represented in VSE. Females formed 31% of the vocational students in the year 2005/2006, however most of the girls (88.4%) are concentrated in the commercial stream. Apart from the commercial stream, girls form only 8.8% of the industrial and agricultural students (7.7 % in industrial stream and 10.5% of agricultural streams). Vocational education is available for girls in two governorates only: Hebron and Gaza, while the rest 14 governorates have no industrial or agricultural secondary education for girls.

Gender inequality, where access to vocational education is concerned, reflects not only the status that Palestinian society attributes to women, but also a gendered division of labour. The division of responsibilities and tasks between men and women in the Palestinian society is based on a complex system of long-standing traditions and attitudes. Girls who continue their schooling in the vocational branch therefore choose specialities leading to a job typically occupied by women, such as cosmetician or clothing manufacture. However, there are indications that new occupations are opening up for girls (Abu Nahleh, 1996).

The gender inequalities in vocational education provision means that boys and girls are not prepared equally for integration into the LM and that vocational education for girls is clearly not LM oriented. The tracer study included 172 graduated girls. This number formed 10.1% of the traced graduates and covers all girls who graduated during the period 2004-2006 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Table (1) shows that the percentage of girls who pursued their higher education (57%) is significantly higher than the percentage of boys (51%) in both years. It also shows that more young women (17%) than young men (6%) were without employment or not seeking employment.

Table (1): Percentage distribution of traced VSs graduates who graduated during the period 2004-2006 by sex and employment status.

Graduates status	Sex		
	Males	Females	Total
Continue their higher education	51%	57%	51%
Employed	30%	6%	27%
Unemployed and seeking job	13%	20%	14%
Unemployed and do not seeking job	6%	17%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: the tracer study.

Out of 19 specializations which exist nowadays in industrial and agricultural VSEs, girls could register in the following six specializations: industrial electronics, computer maintenance, beautification, clothes manufacturing, animal production and plant production. Table (1) illustrates also that 6% of the female graduates were employed, 20% were unemployed and 17% of the female graduates were not seeking work owing to reasons such as marriage, travelling abroad, etc.

3. VSE is not labour- market oriented

The tracer study of 1701 graduates illustrated that more than half of the graduates were continuing their higher education through either joining community colleges like Alhijawi College in Nablus, taking a two year Diploma programme in a university like the Palestine Polytechnic University, or enrolling in universities inside and outside the country to obtain bachelor degrees (see table 2). The tendency to pursue higher education confirms the views of the interviewed training providers and employers that VSE is higher education oriented rather than LM oriented. This phenomenon is not limited to this setting but it is a common feature school-based vocational training in many developing countries (Bennell & Uwaidat, 2006).

The tracer study exposed that 8% of the graduates withdrew from the LM and were not seeking jobs for different reasons such as: travelling abroad, imprisonment, or getting married (limited to females), etc. That means that only 41% of the graduates became part of the labour force. However the tracer study found that only 27% of this labour force was employed and the rest (14%) were unemployed and seeking jobs (table 1). These figures indicate clearly low effectiveness of Palestinian VSE in relation to training for immediate employment in the LM.

Of those 27% of the labour forces who were working, a few percentage had either joined a family business or had established their business with the initial capital being provided by family members, while the majority of graduates have a waged-work and were working for enterprises in different sectors; Public, NGOs and private.

When the graduates were asked about the difficulties they are facing in starting their own project, 83% pointed out that the deteriorated economic conditions prevent them from starting their own business, while 30% of them attribute that to the lack of experience not only in their specialisations but also in understanding how to start their own business. One-quarter of them referred to the lack of confidence.

4. Relevance of VSE

The tracer study revealed that 55% of the employed graduates were found working in employment not related to their specialisations, while 45% were found working in their specialisations. Some graduates mentioned that they did not wish to work in their specialisations. Other VSs graduates even pursued the employment in which they were trained but did not continue for long in the occupation for which they had trained.

The length of job search was one of the indicators in the tracer study. Of those who were working among the study sample, 65% found a job within 6 months after graduation, 16% within 12 months, and 12% within 18 months. Scarcity of jobs was the main reason for not obtaining employment. Of the 53 jobless graduates who were questioned, 30% mentioned that they were unable to join the LM because they did not find work in their specialisation, while 37% mentioned they were unable to find a job neither in their specialisation, nor outside their specialisation. 25% of the job seekers believed that they were unable to find a job because of the graduates' poor preparation for employment. These graduates believed that the level of supportive infrastructure (laboratories, building space, library facilities, etc) had been much below the level provided in good vocational schools.

It seems that the lack of satisfaction with the training received at VSs was not limited to the unemployed graduates but also included a significant number of those who were employed, training providers and employers as well. The study sample revealed that 44% of the employed graduates, 42% of the training providers and 60% of the employers believed that the training received at VSs was inadequate and identified

deficiencies in VSEs that included equipment shortages, inappropriate existing equipment, undeveloped curricula, short duration of training, only theoretical education, shortage of trainers and incompatibility with the LM.

The tracer study demonstrated that 36% of the working graduates were completely satisfied with their jobs, 33% were partially satisfied, while 31% were unsatisfied. The main reasons for dissatisfaction according to the working graduates were: low wages, unsuitable occupation, poor work conditions, remote place of work, and irregular employment. The tracer study showed that 16.4% of the working graduates are searching for another or better job.

Some training providers stressed that the low status given to TVET graduates in the Palestinian society, inhibits the recruitment of capable and motivated students and results in significant attrition of TVET trainees and workers into other occupations. The effect of low status of TVET graduates is not only limited to the social and psychological sides, but also includes the financial side. According to the PCBS survey, 56% of the employed graduates were receiving less than 1000 NIS as a monthly wage. This amount is extremely low according to the standards of living in Palestine. (PCBS, 2006, p. 135).

The attrition of VSE graduates to other occupations would strongly raise questions pertinent to the cost-effectiveness of VSE in comparison to general academic preparation of students. VSE is a more expensive alternative to general education because of the necessity of providing specialised equipment, facilities, instruction, and work placements. The tracer study found that a large proportion of graduates, who had been trained at considerable expense in specific occupations, did not practice those occupations, so the return on investment and relevance of vocational education becomes an issue for scrutiny.

The Palestinian Authority, and in particular MOEHE, should assume that it is unlikely that graduates will practice the specific job skills they learn in vocational schools. Therefore, it seems that a shift in the Palestinian policy makers' thinking needs to take place. Instead of

assuming that the purpose of VSE is to prepare students for careers in specific occupations, it is more appropriate to assume that the job skills learned in VSs are merely the vehicle for mastering the knowledge and skills required in a wide variety of future occupations, jobs, and task combinations, many of which do not yet exist. In addition, the distinction between technical jobs and non-technical jobs is rapidly becoming blurred and less important as the skills required become more service and information oriented.

Therefore, it could be argued that rather than training institutions and vocational schools trying to keep up with the ever-accelerating rate of LM transformation by inventing new programmes and specialities and acquiring new technologies, they could concentrate on student/training mastery of higher level of technical vocational, problem-solving, and information management skills that can be applied across general industrial sectors and broad occupational groupings.

The objective is to facilitate, rather than to impede LM mobility as the demands of the LM keep changing. Under such a paradigm the intended outcome is not the mastery of a hierarchy of skills in a narrow occupation but rather the mastery of competencies required to gain entry to a broad sector of economic activity and to be able to move easily from job to job in and around that sector or occupational grouping.

Another important issue is related to the increasing role of small enterprises. 91% of the Palestinian firms have less than 5 employees (Hamed & Ersheid, 2007, p.46) are substantial market for the TVET system. It is important to understand the characteristics of employment in small enterprises so that structures and programmes can be designed to prepare students for self – employment or paid employment in very small enterprises.

Palestinian TVET and educational planners need to take these factors into consideration when developing structures and designing programmes aimed at preparing young people for the future needs of the LM. For example, courses in starting and operating a small business might be a required or optional component in all technical / vocational curricula.

Transferable skills such as communications, customer service, job search skills and personal management skills should be integrated into technical / vocational curricula.

Responsiveness of VSE

It is evident that those who are more skilled are more likely to remain employed or find new employment, so high quality training for the whole labour force to a high level of skills has become critical.

The issue here is whether the received training qualifies graduates to join the LM. 70% of the graduates and 74% of training providers have positive views. On the other hand, 58% of the employers and their representatives have an opposite view. They think that graduates need additional specific training and field training to prepare them for the LM. This is, of course, a discrepancy and widening gap between the supply side and the demand side.

The PCBS national survey illustrated that among the factors that assist graduates having a paid job are personal relations which come first and even before the academic performance. Factors such as: ability to work under risk, foreign languages, computer skills and administrative skills came near to the bottom of the list (PCBS, 2006, p.199). The field work confirmed that this conclusion is still valid.

Although most of the graduates believed that the training they received provided a foundation for further advancement, a significant apportion of VSs graduates and training providers believed that graduates are not usually hired because they have a specific education / training background and credentials. The hiring practices of most of the searched graduates and firms interviewed suggest that entry level recruitment normally occurs through personal or business contacts, through the recommendations of current employees who have a family member or a friend who is available for work. Again, motivation to learn and personal characteristics such as reliability, loyalty, and willingness to work hard were mentioned as the most important hiring criteria.

Out of the study sample, one-quarter of the graduates believed that there is no direct relation between their training at VSs and their employment in the LM with 30% of the graduates stating that the relation is quite weak. Only 45% of the graduates perceived positive linkages between training and employment.

The job seekers of VSs graduates used a variety of strategies to approach the LM, including utilising personal relationships, asking friends, reading newspapers and submitting applications to employers. When the employed graduates were asked how they knew about the job, their answers indicated that the main three were: via a friend (39%), through personal contacts (30%), and via media and newspapers (8%).

It is to be noted here that none of the graduates mentioned the Labour Offices as a means to reach the LM. In the national survey which was conducted by the PCBS in 2005, Labour Offices were amongst the less important factors for providing jobs for the graduates. Only 4.5% of the working graduates got their jobs via the Labour Offices, and only 18% of the graduates job seekers registered in Labour Offices (PCBS, 2006, p. 216).

The graduates who did not register in Labour Offices gave a number of reasons for this. 34% of the graduates claimed that they did not know about Labour Offices, 19% mentioned that the jobs available via Labour Offices were inappropriate, while 17.4 % thought that registration in Labour Offices required personal relations (PCBS, 2006, p. 216). This underlines the necessity of organising trips for graduates to visit Labour Offices in the future.

It is to be mentioned here that in many cases there were underdeveloped structures and procedures available in most firms for the recruitment, classification, management and training of employees. Most of the firms interviewed did not have formal recruitment practices or written job descriptions. This situation may result from the over-supply of workers that has characterised the Palestinian LM for many years. When there is an over-supply of any resource, there is little incentive to manage it carefully.

But, is the LM able to absorb the graduates? The majority of both providers of training and employers had quite similar views about the absorption of graduates into the LM. 82% of the training providers and 67% of the employers and their representatives felt that the LM is unable to absorb graduates of VSE due to the LM being small, under siege with political instability, with a high unemployment rate, and dominated by family or small business.

5. Lack of communication and cooperation

All TVET systems worldwide recognise that effective school-to-work transition systems are dependent upon the quality of communication between training providers and employment market. It is also recognised that building effective communication and relations is one of the most challenging, frustrating, and demanding tasks facing the training providers. This is because, firstly; the initiative must always be taken by the VSs, as only the largest most progressive companies develop specific workforce training departments. Secondly; while it is possible to set objectives, it is difficult to institutionalize an approach as the external environment is always fluid.

In reviewing the structures and delivery of VSs, it is obvious that there is little recognition of the employment realities that graduates will face after graduation. VSs live in isolation, no lively relationship or systematic communications exist between VSs and LM.

About 70% of the surveyed graduates pointed out that nobody from the LM visited their schools during their studies, and two-thirds of the graduates mentioned that they have no idea about the representatives of the LM, while 55% mentioned that there were no arrangements for them to visit institutions and representatives, and that 55% of them have no idea about workers' representatives.

In addition, almost half of the graduates do not receive any information pertinent to the LM during their study, and 81% of the graduates did not receive any orientation, support or counselling that could introduce them to job opportunities. Moreover, the survey

indicated that more than one-third of the graduates do not pay VSs a visit after their graduation.

The interviews with the training providers established that 55% of them did not visit any firm in the LM due to the political and economic situation, absence of a meaningful relationship and lack of coordination between VSs and employers. Similarly, 46% of the employers and their representatives admitted that they have had no chance to visit the VSs in their areas.

Some big employers stated that they had never received any invitation from VSs to do so, while others mentioned that they have had no time to do so. Moreover, 68% of the employers stated that none of the VSs in their areas visited them. They also reported that their relations with unions of workers and representatives were superficial.

On the other hand, 82% of the training providers thought that employers had little idea about VSs specialisations, nor about graduates' competencies and skills and 67% of the employers and their representatives admitted that this is true.

When employers and their representatives were asked about the reasons behind this lack of information and communications, they identified a cluster of reasons that all refer to a shortage of marketing. VSs neither invited them nor approached them, and do not usually organise exhibitions to present graduates' work and production, etc. While training providers thought that employers had no time, lack awareness and thought that they did not have to know about VSs and their graduates because of the overflow of job seekers.

When training providers and employers were asked to identify levels of cooperation between VSs and LM in the field of curricula development, 50% of training providers and 71% of employers admitted to the low level of cooperation. The same applies to the issue of "exchanging expertise" when 58% of the training providers and 67% of the employers pointed out to a minimum level of cooperation.

In addition, VSEs are almost providing no career guidance or assistance for graduates to find work. When the employed graduates were asked how they were chosen for the jobs, their answers were as follows: 44% via practical examination of their experience and skills by the employer, 23% via a friend, 15% through interviews and competitions, 5% personal relations, and less than 4% through direct contact with the employer.

To conclude, it is clear that a real misunderstanding and lack of systematic communication exists between the supply side (training providers and graduates) and the demand side (private sectors and employers). Both sides do not know each other well. The training providers exercise their responsibilities inside their schools and institutes and think they have nothing to do outside their schools. Training providers and schools administrators need to extend their activities through adopting an out-reach approach to employers.

In the meantime, an increasing level of external inputs should be introduced into VSE through a variety of means. Enterprises should be actively involved in the theoretical and practical training of those preparing for occupations in their particular sector, and should interact with VSEs regarding the organization of such training and in the revised curriculum development process. They should also be encouraged to make their equipment and facilities available for practical training.

The link between training and the workplace becomes a natural force to improve what each is doing and might do for the other. Changes in the LM conditions are also prompting changes in education and training policies. Employers' involvement no longer means training students for predictable, static jobs. Instead, employers and VSEs are caught up together in an evolving LM with more flexible production and life-long learning.

Conclusions

This study revealed that VSE occupies a small position in the school system. Girls in particular are under-represented in this kind of

education. VSE is not LM oriented, and its programmes currently in use are not designed around industry – defined performance objectives and expectations. Palestinian VSE is ineffective, unresponsive and irrelevant to the LM.

VSs are almost providing no career guidance or assistance for graduates to find work. Most of the graduates choose their specializations based on their personal preferences rather than the needs of the LM. In finding a job, personal relations come first, before academic performance in getting a paid job. Factors such as: ability to work under risk, foreign language, computer skills and administrative skills came near the bottom of the list.

No constructive relations or systematic communications exist between VSs and LM due to the shortage of marketing in both sides. The linkages between VSE and the LM are weak, superficial and not systematic.

Recommendations

A fundamental prerequisite for harmonizing the compatibility of VSE with the labour needs is the need to improve its infrastructure and quality. VSE as preparation for an occupation should provide the foundation for productive and satisfying careers, the acquisition of broad knowledge and generic skills, that are applicable to a number of occupations within a given field, An individual is then not limited in his/her choice of occupation and is able to transfer from one field to another during his/her working life.

In order to overcome the problem of misunderstanding and lack of systematic communication between the supply side and the demand side, training providers and VSs administrations should extend their activities to include the community through adopting out-reach approaches. In the meantime, an increasing level of external inputs should be introduced into VSE through variety of means.

Employers should be actively involved in the theoretical and practical training of those preparing for occupations in their sector, and

should interact with VSs regarding the organization of such training and in the revised curriculum development process. They should also be encouraged to make their equipment and facilities available for practical training.

Planners of vocational education are urged to initiate mechanisms of monitoring transformations in the LM, especially in relation to quantitative and qualitative shifts in the demand for manpower. This will help establish VSE which is demand-driven in relation to the kinds of needed skills and the size of demand from each.

VSs need to improve their marketing efforts, to raise the awareness of the employers' community and the population at large. Advisory committees could be in place in all VSs. Part of the duties of these committees is to formulate coordinating mechanisms in order to develop an effective approach to bridge the gap between VSs and the LM.

Equal access and participation for girls should be ensured by widespread dissemination of information concerning opportunities; gender-sensitive guidance and counselling and other incentives relevant to the Palestinian context. The role and opportunities for women in the LM need to be given a greater prominence and consideration despite cultural and social problems.

There is a necessity to develop a culture of employment services, and to promote these services throughout the country. Graduates, training providers, and employers suggested quite similar ideas to improve the graduates' chances to join the LM, which could be summarised in the following:

1. Promoting linkages between VSs and LM via mutual visits, exchanges workshops, exhibitions, brochures.
2. Raising the awareness of graduates, employers and their representatives about the advantages of the mutual cooperation.
3. Disseminating information, and marketing of VSs and the graduates' competencies and skills.

4. Diversifying training and initiating market- driven new programmes in order to respond to the LM needs.
5. Allowing the employers’ representatives to be involved in the decision making process pertinent to vocational education.
6. Following-up graduates and conducting tracer studies after graduation.
7. Promoting cooperation and coordination between VSs and employers unions and representatives.

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Enclosures

Table (2): Distribution of traced graduates & graduates who were pursuing their higher education by their specializations in 2007.

Specialization	Total Graduates			Graduates who continued education			% of graduates who continued higher education		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Computer Maintenance	147	68	215	98	42	140	66.7	61.8	65.1
Animal Production	158	15	173	94	10	104	59.5	66.7	60.1
Plant Production	123	28	151	80	19	99	65.0	67.9	65.6
Industrial Electronics	133	32	165	88	22	110	66.2	68.8	66.7
Electrical Utilization	185	0	185	89	0	89	48.1		48.1
Automobile mechanics	170	0	170	83	0	83	48.8		48.8
Carpentry	105	0	105	23	0	23	21.9		21.9
Electricity of Motor Vehicles	72	0	72	28	0	28	38.9		38.9
Radio & TV	79	0	79	46	0	46	58.2		58.2
Sheet Metal Work & Welding	46	0	46	12	0	12	26.1		26.1
Air Conditioning & Refrigeration	61	0	61	33	0	33	54.1		54.1
Construction & land survey	46	0	46	13	0	13	28.3		28.3
Plumbing & Central Heating	53	0	53	15	0	15	28.3		28.3
Clothes Manufacturing	0	11	11	0	2	2	18.2		18.2
Beautification	0	18	18	0	6	6		33.3	33.3
Upholstery & Decoration	57	0	57	20	0	20	35.1		35.1
Lathing & Machining	44	0	44	19	0	19	43.2		43.2
Communication Technology	50	0	50	35	0	35	70.0		70.0
Total	1529	172	1701	776	101	877	50.8	58.7	51.6

Source: the tracer study.

ملحق رقم (١)

منطقة:

استبيان خريجي المدارس المهنية (الصناعية، الزراعية)

رقم الاستمارة:

الأخ / الأخت خريج /ة المدرسة الصناعية:

نأمل منك تعبئة هذا الاستبيان الذي يهدف لمعرفة مدى مواكبة البرامج التي تقدمها وزارة التربية والتعليم في المدارس الصناعية مع احتياجات سوق العمل وذلك لتحسين الفرص أمام خريجي المدارس الصناعية مستقبلاً للالتحاق بسوق العمل. ليس مطلوباً منك أن تعرف/ي بنفسك أو تذكر/ي اسمك، ونؤكد لك أن المعلومات التي سيتم تقديمها سوف تعامل بسرية، ولن تستخدم إلا لأغراض البحث العلمي.

الرجاء وضع إشارة بجانب الإجابة الصحيحة، وتعبئة المعلومات المطلوبة.

١. الجنس: ذكر أنثى
٢. مكان السكن: نابلس قرية مدينة مخيم
 رام الله قرية مدينة مخيم
 الخليل قرية مدينة مخيم
 غزة قرية مدينة مخيم
٣. العمر: ١٨-١٩ ٢٠-٢١ ٢٢ فأكثر
٤. ما اسم المدرسة الصناعية / المهنية التي تخرجت منها؟
 نابلس الصناعية الخليل الصناعية
 العروب الزراعية القدس الصناعية
 دير دهبان الصناعية بنات غزة الصناعية
 دير البلح الصناعية

٥. تاريخ التخرج ٢٠٠٦ ٢٠٠٥ ٢٠٠٤ ٢٠٠٣
٦. اسم تخصصك المهني؟
- إنتاج نباتي تجاري
- إنتاج حيواني فندقة
- لحام وتشكيل المعادن تجميل
- أدوات صحية وتدفئة مركزية تصنيع الملابس
- ميكانيك سيارات صيانة حاسوب
- تكييف وتبريد تلفاز وراديو
- مساحة وبناء نجارة
- كهرباء سيارات الكترونياات صناعية
- صيانة الآلات المكتبية تكنولوجيا الاتصال
- تنجيد وديكور خراطة وتسوية
- كهرباء استعمال
٧. ماذا فعلت بعد التخرج من المدرسة الصناعية؟
- التحقت ببرنامج تدريبي آخر تابعت دراستي
- التحقت بسوق العمل عاطل عن العمل
- أخرى: حدد/ي _____
٨. هل حاولت الالتحاق بسوق العمل بعد التخرج؟ نعم لا
٩. إذا كانت إجابتك على السؤال رقم (٨) بالنفي (لا)، فلماذا:
- تابعت دراستي والتحقت بكلية/ جامعة لا أرغب في العمل
- التحقت ببرنامج تدريبي آخر أسباب أخرى، حدد/ي _____
١٠. هل نجحت في الالتحاق بسوق العمل نعم لا

١١. إذا كانت الإجابة على السؤال رقم (١٠) بالنفي، فلماذا برأيك لم تتجح/ي في الالتحاق بسوق العمل؟

- الفرص التي عرضت علي كانت دون المطلوب
- تدني الرواتب المعروضة
- لم أجد أي فرصة عمل في مجال التخصص
- لم أجد أي فرصة عمل في مجال التخصص أو في غير مجال التخصص
- هناك فائض في نفس التخصص في سوق العمل
- التأهيل الذي حصلت عليه لم يكن كافياً
- أسباب أخرى، حدد/ي _____

١٢. إذا كانت الإجابة على السؤال رقم (١٠) بالإيجاب (نعم) يرجى الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية:

- (١) عملت في نفس التخصص نعم لا
- (٢) التدريب الذي حصلت عليه في المدرسة الصناعية، كان: كافياً ومناسباً غير كاف، وينقصه التالي: أ. _____
ب. _____
ج. _____
- (٣) طبيعة العمل الذي قمت به عمل خاص لي/لأسرتي عمل بأجر في محل / مصنع / شركة/ الخ أخرى، حدد/ي _____
- (٤) مدة العمل الذي قمت به عمل دائم عمل مؤقت عمل بدوام جزئي كلي عمل بدوام جزئي كلي
- (٥) كيف تم اختيارك للقيام بالعمل؟ من خلال مسابقة/ مقابلات/ امتحان من خلال التجربة أخرى، حدد/ي _____

- ٦) مدى الرضا عن العمل الذي قمت به: راض ومقتنع به كلية راض بصورة جزئية غير راضي، لكن لم يكن هناك خيار آخر
- ٧) كم من الوقت أستغرقك الحصول على عمل؟ أقل من ٦ أشهر أقل من سنة أقل من ١٨ شهرا سنتين ٣ سنوات وأكثر
- ٨) الراتب الذي تحصل/ي عليه حاليا بالشيكل: أقل من ١٠٠٠ ١٠٠٠-١٥٠٠ ١٥٠٠-٢٠٠٠ أكثر من ٢٠٠٠
- ٩) عدد سنوات الخدمة في العمل الحالي. سنة سنتين أو أقل ٣ سنوات أو أقل أكثر من ٣ سنوات
- ١٠) كيف عرفت عن هذا العمل، ووصلت إليه؟ من خلال الاتصال المباشر / الشخصي أخبرك صديق / زميل عنه قرأت أو سمعت عنه في الصحف ووسائل الإعلام من خلال الانترنت قام صاحب العمل بالاتصال بك أخرى، حدد/ي: _____
- ١١) ما مدى مساهمة الموضوعات الدراسية التي درستها في تخصصك المهني على حسن قيامك بعملك الحالي: مساهمة كبيرة متوسطة ضعيفة
- أ. المواد الثقافية مساهمة كبيرة متوسطة ضعيفة
- ب. مواد التخصص مساهمة كبيرة متوسطة ضعيفة

ج. المواد العلمية المساندة مساهمة كبيرة متوسطة ضعيفة

١٢) ما مدى مساهمة التدريب الذي مررت به في المدرسة الصناعية على حسن قيامك بعملك الحالي؟

أ. محتواه ومضمونه مساهمة كبيرة متوسطة ضعيفة

ب. حداثة الأجهزة المستخدمة مساهمة كبيرة متوسطة ضعيفة

ج. كفاءة المدرسين مساهمة كبيرة متوسطة ضعيفة

د. الزمن المخصص له مساهمة كبيرة متوسطة ضعيفة

هـ. صلته بواقع العمل مساهمة كبيرة متوسطة ضعيفة

و. توفر المواد الأولية مساهمة كبيرة متوسطة ضعيفة

١٣) ما رأي الأهل في التحاقك بهذا العمل؟

١٣. هل تعتقد بوجود علاقة بين التدريب الذي حصلت عليه في المدرسة الصناعية وبين فرص التحاقك بسوق العمل؟

لا يوجد علاقة مباشرة يوجد علاقة ضعيفة يوجد علاقة قوية

١٤. كيف يمكن برأيك تحسين التدريب في المدرسة الصناعية التي تخرجت منها؟

أ. _____

ب. _____

ج. _____

١٥. ما الذي كان يمكن برأيك عمله لتحسين فرص التحاقك بسوق العمل؟
أ. _____
ب. _____
ج. _____
١٦. ما رأيك في مستوى المدرسين/ المدربين الذين علموك من حيث:
أ. مؤهلاتهم العلمية عالي متوسط متدني
ب. خبراتهم العلمية عالي متوسط متدني
ج. معرفتهم بواقع العمل عالي متوسط متدني
١٧. هل زرت المدرسة الصناعية التي تخرجت منها بعد التخرج؟
 لا نعم، عدد المرات _____
١٨. هل قام أحد من أصحاب العمل بزيارة المدرسة الصناعية خلال دراستك فيها؟
 نعم لا
١٩. هل تعلم/ي من هي الجهات التي تمثل أصحاب العمل؟
 نعم لا
٢٠. هل تعلم/ي من هي الجهات التي تمثل العمال؟
 نعم لا
٢١. هل تلقيت من المدرسة الصناعية خلال وجودك فيها أية معلومات حول سوق العمل؟
 نعم لا
٢٢. هل تم أثناء وجودك في المدرسة المهنية تنظيم أي زيارة لأي جهة تنتمي لسوق العمل (غرفة تجارية، شركة، مصنع، الخ)؟
 نعم لا
٢٣. هل تلقيت أية مساعدة أو استشارة من أية جهة/ مؤسسة لتوجيهك لفرصة عمل مناسبة، أو لدعم التحاقك بسوق العمل؟
 نعم لا
٢٤. ما هي الصعوبات التي تواجهك للبدء بمشروع إنتاجي خاص بك؟
 الخبرة العملية
 الخوف من الفشل
 الوضع الاقتصادي المتدهور
 أسباب أخرى، حدد/ي _____